

# JERS – Jury Evidence Recording System

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## *Middle District of Louisiana*

The U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Louisiana uses the Jury Evidence Recording System (JERS) to capture evidence electronically during a trial. The Court provides evidence presentation equipment to any member of the bar practicing within the middle district of Louisiana. A training session on the use of this equipment can be requested by contacting the Courtroom Deputy for the trial.

## Preparing for Trial in a JERS equipped Courtroom

### E-Bench Book

- How to Submit Electronic Exhibit Files
  - E-Bench Book - Electronic evidence files should be provided on a USB drive, DVD, or CD.
- Requirements for Exhibit File Types
  - All electronic evidence should be provided using the following formats:
    - Documents and Photographs: **.pdf, .jpg, .bmp, .tif, .gif**
    - Video and Audio Recordings: **.avi, .wmv, .mpg, .mp3, .mp4, .wma, .wav, .3gpp**
  - Regarding the file size of electronic evidence, individual files should **not exceed 500MB**. If possible, exhibits approaching or exceeding this size limit should be separated into multiple files. Note, PDF documents can often be reduced significantly in size by using tools such as Adobe's "Reduce File Size" feature. Images can be significantly reduced in file size by lowering its resolution or dimensions, usually with minimal affect to viewing quality. Videos should be separated into 10 minute clips to satisfy the 500 MB threshold.
- Exhibit Formatting Instructions for Batch Importing
  - Exhibit files can be formatted in a manner that permits them to be batch imported into the JERS system. The method used is described below.

### File Naming Method

- All files are provided on a single storage device such as a CD, DVD, or USB drive.
- Using any software or method, exhibit files are renamed using a naming convention similar to:  
**(exhibit number)-(exhibit part)\_(exhibit description).(file extension)**
- The use of the “underscore” character is required when a description of the exhibit is included and cannot be used elsewhere in the exhibit name.
- Example listing of valid exhibit file names:  
**“1-a\_photograph.jpg”, “12\_2009 Tax Statement.pdf”, “12(a)\_camera footage.wmv”**

## Process of JERS during a Trial

### ***NOTICE TO COUNSEL***

Electronic evidence files (an Electronic Bench Book) shall be provided, by each party, on a single storage device such as a CD, DVD, or USB drive to the courtroom deputy prior to the beginning of trial (specified time will be referenced in the ORDER). These files will be utilized **BY THE COURT ONLY** and will not be provided to an opposing party.

JERS is **NOT** used by counsel during trial to present evidence. Exhibits shall be presented to the jury by a laptop connect or by conventionally presenting exhibits using the electronic document camera. It is the responsibility of counsel that exhibits used during trial coincide in exhibit number and image as the exhibits electronically submitted to the court and to substitute any documents that have been altered.

***Parties will still be required to submit the original exhibits to the courtroom deputy, at the time of introduction at trial, for the official court record.***

- **Admitted Exhibits** – As exhibits are admitted during a trial the Courtroom Deputy will check-off the exhibit as being admitted. This does not mean it will automatically be viewable by the jury during deliberation. (See *Releasing Exhibits to the Jury*).
  - Exhibits can be admitted from the E-Bench Book presented to the court before the start of the trial.
  - JERS also has the functionality to capture live evidence being displayed over the evidence presentation equipment (document camera, DVD/VCR, or audio system). A snapshot, audio or video clip may be admitted to the record when requested by counsel and approved by the Courtroom Deputy.
- **Substitution of Exhibits** – Counsel must clearly communicate to the Courtroom Deputy whenever a substitution is made and present the exhibit during the trial in electronic form on a USB flash drive, DVD or CD. This is so that the Courtroom Deputy may update the exhibit list in JERS for use during deliberation.
- **Counsel and Courtroom Deputy Review Exhibit List** – Prior to deliberation counsel and the Courtroom Deputy may review the admitted exhibit list and preview exhibits.
- **Releasing Exhibits to the Jury** – When the jury retires to deliberate, the Courtroom Deputy will release exhibits from the JERS application at the direction of the presiding judge. At that time, the released exhibits will be available for the Jury to review electronically in the jury deliberation room.